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SUBJECT: GHANA AUTHORITIES RAID ACCRA BROTHEL

REF: ACCRA 107

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On Saturday, January 19, Ghana police conducted a raid of several brothels alleged to be involved in child prostitution. Over 200 individuals were picked up in the raid. Three "brothel agents" were arrested and held; the clients were arrested and released on bail; the adult women were registered and released without charge, and 15 minors with four babies are currently in the Kodiabe shelter for protection. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) On Saturday, January 19, at approximately 10:45 pm, the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) of the Ghana Police conducted a raid of several brothels near Kwame Nkrumah circle in Accra. According to several reports, three "brothel agents" and 76 clients were arrested, although the clients were released on bail. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and government sources, some 160 women and girls were brought to the Medina Welfare facility for interviews with the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to determine age and to identify any trafficking victims. All the females were Ghanaian. Those determined to be adults were allowed to depart from the center without charge, and a reported 4 minors disappeared from the center during the interviews.

13. (SBU) On January 21, the 15 remaining girls and their four children were moved to the Kodiabe shelter, a permanent facility run by a Catholic organization. For these 15 girls and their children, it appears that the operation has provided necessary rescue and assistance. This raid is reportedly the first time that these Ghanaian government agencies have worked together to act against child prostitution and trafficking in persons, and to provide aftercare for the victims. At the same time, there were some gaps in implementation, which may be attributed to the fact that this was the first such effort in Ghana, and that the number of people detained was three times the number anticipated.

14. (SBU) Several journalists, as well as the NGO Enslavement Prevention Alliance, West Africa (EPAWA), have alleged that some girls fled the Medina shelter due to inadequate care and security. (Note: The government and some other stake holders were concerned that the raid take place only when security and counseling for victims were firmly in place.) EPAWA alleges that some 45 girls may have been taken by pimps, or ran away. In contrast, Ghanaian officials indicate that while four minors did disappear, the others were determined to be adults and were released without charge.

15. (SBU) Several Ghanaian officials involved in the operation have alleged that EPAWA leaked information about the raid and the shelter to the press, jeopardizing the operation, possibly compromising the identity of minors, and the safety of both the officers and girls. IOM also indicates that EPAWA is not registered as an NGO to operate in Ghana. (Comment: EPAWA has made no official contact with senior officers at Embassy Accra to brief on this matter or share its concerns or other information. End comment.)

¶16. (U) Given the smaller than expected number of minors in the facility, IOM is working with GoG officials to revise the budget. Based on preliminary estimates, the budget for three months of care will be \$36,000. IOM is providing about one third from the PRM-funded Global Assistance Fund. UNICEF has not yet given formal confirmation that they will provide funding, but is anticipated to fund one third, leaving the remainder to be funded by the GoG.

¶17. (U) Psychosocial counselling was provided January 20 at the Medina Shelter and will commence January 23 at Kodiabe. There are currently four DSW staff and one MOWAC staff present there. Medical care has been provided to two infants, and general physical examinations and lab tests will be conducted for all of the girls on January 26.

¶18. (SBU) In a January 23 conversation with Emboff, Ghana Police Criminal Investigation Division Director General Frank Apo-Paku complained that someone from the State Department called his cell phone at 11:30 pm. He remembered the name "Taylor" and did not have additional information. (Note: This is one of several occasions in which direct contact from Washington to non-official USG individuals in Ghana has created concern and confusion, and we request that such contact be appropriately made in coordination with Embassy Accra so as to maximize effective action against this problem and to minimize problems. End Note.)

¶19. (SBU) COMMENT: Embassy is at present unable to confirm whether EPAWA's allegations are correct that some 45 girls left the shelter, or whether the GoG correctly assessed that those individuals were adults and only four minors went missing. At this stage, the GoG is concentrating on providing appropriate care for these minor victims. Post and international organizations, including IOM and UNICEF, are working together to insure that necessary support is provided to the young girls. We will work with partners to help Ghana increase its capacity to develop long-term plans to implement such operations in the future to combat trafficking in persons and protect victims in a sustainable, timely and effective manner. Embassy will also continue to provide necessary training and support to encourage the GOG to bring to justice to the full extent of the law, those who are responsible for such activities. END COMMENT.

BRIDGEWATER